

## International Session 4: ‘How can we maximize the effect of chemotherapy in gastric cancer?’

### IS4-5 IS TRIPLET SUPERIOR TO DOUBLET CHEMOTHERAPY IN ADVANCED GASTRIC CANCER?

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In our meta-analysis published in 2006, last updated in 2010, we described a significant benefit for patients treated with three- drug combinations (5-FU/cisplatin/anthracycline), as compared to 5-FU/anthracycline (HR 0.82; 95% CI 0.73–0.92), as well as 5-FU/platinum/anthracycline-combinations versus 5-FU/P (HR 0.77; 95% CI 0.62–0.95). Are these results still valid in 2013?

- 1) These trials were conducted at a time when second-line chemotherapy was not used systematically. In between, a survival benefit has been demonstrated for second-line chemotherapy versus best supportive care in two randomized trials. Consequently, second-line chemotherapy has become an internationally accepted standard of care. This might decrease the relative importance of three drug-combinations in first line therapy.
- 2) All trials included in this comparison used cisplatin as platinum derivate and 5-FU as fluoropyrimidine. However, the combination of EOX has shown to be superior to ECF, but EOX has never been compared to an oxaliplatin-based two-drug combination. Therefore, the relative contribution of epirubicine to the efficacy of EOX must be considered as unclear. 3) Finally, new three-drug regimens have been developed, such as DCF or FLOT, which might have an improved efficacy as compared to those included in the meta-analysis.

The question is not only: is triplet superior to doublet, but how can we combine the benefit in terms of response rate of triplet combinations with the better tolerability of two-drug combination. Therefore, not only the development of further targeted drugs, but as well novel treatment strategies, with for example induction and maintenance phases, which reduce the burden of treatment as much as possible without compromising efficacy and identify those patients who have the greatest benefit from three- versus two-drug combinations, is highly warranted.